AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY ON TEACHING AN ONLINE UNIVERSITY COURSE ABOUT HAWAIʻI CREOLE

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ABSTRACT

In the middle of the spring 2020 semester, the COVID-19 pandemic caused higher education institutions in the United States to abruptly shift all courses online. Subsequently, university courses remained online in fall 2020 as the pandemic continued in Hawaiʻi. As a novice undergraduate course instructor who was scheduled to teach a course about Pidgin in Hawaiʻi, action research was used to investigate and address the three goals of this study: 1) determine helpful online classroom management strategies, 2) learn what students gained from the course and whether their perspectives towards Pidgin changed, and 3) document my professional development. Course material, student work, and my own reflection journal were collected as quantitative and qualitative data sources. The results indicated that student accountability to prepare for in-class activities is helpful for online classroom management. By the end of the course, students not only learned about Pidgin, but also held a more positive perspective towards Pidgin as a language. This study also identified areas of professional and personal growth and areas in need of further development as a novice university instructor. These findings provide pedagogical implications for online instruction as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

Keywords: action research, COVID-19, online instruction, Hawaiʻi Creole, Pidgin

This study used action research to investigate online instruction for a university course during the COVID-19 pandemic. While previous studies on face-to-face (F2F) and online instruction in higher education were conducted at a time when there was no pandemic, the fall 2020 semester started seven months after the first Coronavirus case was reported in the United States and five months after the abrupt transition to online learning and initial lockdown. At the beginning of the fall 2020 semester, Honolulu went into a second lockdown period that lasted for

four weeks. The undergraduate course used in this study was called Introduction to Pidgin in Hawaiʻi, and the goal of the course was to raise awareness to language rights and language discrimination towards Pidgin, which is one of the native languages used by locals. The three goals of this action research study were to learn about (1) the appropriate classroom management strategies for online instruction during a pandemic, (2) the students' knowledge and perspectives about Pidgin during an unusual semester, and (3) the instructor's own professional development in teaching this course.

TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Traditional courses in higher education institutions are either large, teacher-centered classes or smaller, student-centered classes. Large classes with a teacher-centered approach often entail information transfer through long lectures, which has been found to be less effective than small classes in student learning (Cuseo, 2007). For example, there is less active participation and preparedness by students, fewer opportunities for critical thinking, and fewer opportunities for instructor feedback to students (Bryant, 2005; Cuseo, 2007). On the other hand, these opportunities have more potential to occur in small classes where teachers use student-centered activities to guide students to develop their own conceptions or change their conceptions on the subject matter (Prosser & Trigwell, 2014). Small classes are thus considered to provide a higher quality education experience in which students not only learn new information, but also develop critical thinking skills to form their own conceptions of the topic.

To improve student engagement and critical thinking in large and small classes, online discussion boards have become a popular tool to supplement F2F classes with active online participation. Because large class sizes limit the amount of participation students can engage in, previous research has shown that online discussion boards allow for equal opportunities of participation from all students rather than the few brave students who are willing to speak up in class (Bryant, 2005). Moreover, discussion boards allow instructors to monitor students' comprehension of the class material and address any misunderstandings (Bryant, 2005). Research also suggest the teacher's expertise and teaching competency is more essential for student learning than class size (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010). While the combination of online discussion boards with other student-centered activities have shown promising benefits to

student learning, Herington and Weaven (2008) have called for research to investigate how these activities "should be structured so as to emphasise student technical skills development and content learning rather than the promotion of task completion" (p. 125). In other words, rather than the online discussion board being an isolated task to supplement a F2F course, there should be real world technical skills that students develop and use beyond the course.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, universities often offered some online courses or operated exclusively online as an alternative to F2F classes. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019), over 6.9 million students were enrolled in an online course at a degree-granting postsecondary institution in 2018. The benefits and affordances of distance learning for the institution allow for an increase in student enrollment without the worry of reaching maximum physical classroom capacity, arrangement of desks, and equipment (Bettinger et al., 2017). As online courses allow for larger class sizes, research has found that increasing the class size in an online context did not affect students' grades or the quality of the course (Bettinger et al., 2017).

While class size does not affect students' learning, previous research has demonstrated that offering the course as asynchronous or synchronous does affect students' learning experience. In regards to asynchronous online courses, most of the interaction among the instructor and students is done through asynchronous online discussions through the use of an discussion board. Systematic reviews on asynchronous online discussions have suggested that giving the students structure through clear guidelines that scaffold the discussion is essential for students to think critically and have effective discussions (DiPasquale & Hunter, 2018; Fehrman & Watson, 2020). Smits and Voogt (2017) also suggested that teacher behaviors, such as "addressing the group, neutral acknowledgement, specific praise, elaborate content and online personality" lead to high student satisfaction in asynchronous online courses (p. 110).

While asynchronous online courses seem to rely on structure for effective discussions, synchronous online courses rely on technology working and interactive activities. As for synchronous online courses, previous research comparing synchronous online contexts to F2F contexts in a blended learning course have shown that students in the synchronous group experienced technology issues that disrupted their learning experience, such as problems or malfunctions with the WiFi connection issue, video-conferencing software, computer monitor, microphone, and camera (Olt, 2018). Additionally, previous research has also indicated an

adjustment period for the students and instructor to become comfortable with the synchronous online context as results demonstrated that students felt excluded from the course when they missed a part or the entire class due to technology malfunctions and when their attempts to ask or answer a question were not immediately noticed by their instructor (Olt, 2018; Szeto & Cheng, 2016). Previous studies that investigated synchronous online courses also noted a decrease in student attendance and passive participation (Banna et al., 2015). Thus, student engagement has been a critical issue in synchronous online education and most researchers have suggested that the responsibility to ensure continuous active engagement falls on the instructor of the course to develop interactive activities (Banna et al., 2015; Conrad & Donaldson, 2004; Olt, 2018). To help instructors create an interactive online course, Conrad and Donaldson (2004) developed their Phases of Engagement framework. In their four-phase model, they suggest that instructors spend the first one to two weeks building rapport in the class and then transition to pair work that makes students collaborate in critical thinking, and then into small groups (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004). In the last phase, activities are learner-centered in which the students become the knowledge producers of the course and demonstrate this through discussion leaders or group presentations (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004).

Even though online education has been offered in varying degrees, the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic forced instructors throughout the world to reorganize their F2F courses into an online format. With online education being held on such a massive scale, research has yet to be done on determining the appropriate classroom management strategies and the effects on learning during a pandemic.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The course used in this study was Introduction to Pidgin in Hawaiʻi, which is an introductory course that students can take to fulfill their general education requirement in Diversification-Social Science and their focus requirement in Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues. The term "local" in this study will be used to refer to people who were born and raised in Hawaiʻi. The goals of the course are to understand language rights and language discrimination towards Pidgin and the social, political, and economic issues related to Pidgin and its speakers. Students also learn how Pidgin came to be a creole language and compare the inequality, marginalization,

attitudes, ideologies, and identities to Hawaiian and other Asia-Pacific pidgins and creoles. In the course, students also collect and analyze data to compare how Pidgin and Hawaiian are used in Hawaiʻi. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the course was taught F2F and included guest speakers and assignments that required students to engage with the local community, such as through a community engagement assignment and data collection assignments that required students to interview and survey local people. As the course was moved online due to the pandemic, students attended class from Hawaiʻi or from the U.S. mainland and the platform for the guest speakers and assignments also needed to be modified to follow safety guidelines.

PIDGIN IN HAWAIʻI

Pidgin originated when the first successful sugar plantation began in 1835, where Pidgin Hawaiian was the first to be used among the Hawaiian and immigrant workers (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, etc.) and since then, it evolved into Pidgin English and then into the modern Pidgin that is spoken today (Sakoda & Siegel, 2003). After the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, intense Americanization followed with the establishment of English standard schools (ESS) and statehood was granted in 1959. It was only 19 years later, in 1978, that Hawaiian was once again recognized as an official language. Despite its origins from the plantation era and federal recognition by the United States Census Bureau as an official language in 2015, Pidgin remains an unofficial language in the state of Hawaiʻi.

The unofficial recognition of Pidgin as a language in Hawaiʻi reflects the years of discrimination against it. Discrimination towards Pidgin speakers began with the establishment of ESS in the 1920s, where admission was based on a speaking test that excluded anyone who spoke Pidgin or English with a Pidgin accent (Tamura, 1996). As a result, parents, who had ambitions of having their child achieve a higher social class, trained their child to speak and sound like a Standard English (SE) speaker (Tamura, 1996). Even after the last ESS closed in 1960 (Tamura, 1996), Pidgin was still discouraged at home and at school because it was viewed as "a simplified and bastardized form of SE and that its speakers are therefore cognitively inferior to speakers of SE" (Wong, 1999, p. 209). Popular labels that have been attached to Pidgin, such as broken English, bad English, and improper English, caused Pidgin speakers to be stereotyped as lazy and uneducated (Da Pidgin Coup, 2008; Wong, 1999). Consequently, Pidgin

has been blamed for students' poor performance in school, especially with the acquisition of SE, which led to the Hawaiʻi State Board of Education's 1987 policy to ban Pidgin (Da Pidgin Coup, 2008; Siegel, 1997; Tamura, 2002). The ban was lifted after enormous public backlash as locals argued that Pidgin was their native language and an attack on Pidgin was an attack on their identity and on the community (Tamura, 2002). Another argument made for eliminating Pidgin in education is that SE is the only acceptable language to be successful in education and employment in Hawaiʻi, the U.S. mainland, and abroad (Siegel, 1997). However, evidence shows that Pidgin speakers can become successful in higher education as Tonouchi (2009) explained in his book about how he wrote his master's thesis in Pidgin. After multiple attempts to eradicate Pidgin from the local community, it has not been "easy to assess the depth of the damage that has been done to the psyche of the Pidgin speaking community as years of denigration have normalized the negative attitudes toward Pidgin and obfuscated the linguicism that promotes linguistic hierarchies" (Wong, 1999, p. 207).

One observation of the state of Pidgin after years of suppression, is the reported decrease in number of speakers. While previous studies estimated the number of Pidgin speakers to be about 600,000 spread across the state of Hawaiʻi and locals living in the mainland (Sakoda & Siegel, 2003), a recent report from the State of Hawaiʻi Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) in 2016 estimated that there were a total number of 1,275 people who wrote that they speak Pidgin at home. With a large decrease in speakers being reported, Pidgin advocates have hinted that Pidgin is a dying language. For instance, Tonouchi (2009) posed a question to his readers in a eulogy for Pidgin that asked, "Is Pidgin really in danger of dying?" (p. 26) and explained that fewer locals have passed it down to the next generation because "da general populace still perceives dat english is mo' smart" (p. 33).

Even as Pidgin has prevailed despite the attempts to suppress and eradicate it, efforts have been made to reverse the negative attitudes and normalize positive attitudes and expand the contexts for Pidgin to be used in. For example, researchers and Pidgin advocates have called for schools to support additive bilingualism through accommodation programs where students' home language is used in the classroom (Reynolds, 1999; Sato, 1989; Siegel, 1999). Research on additive bilingualism is also needed to understand the "relationships between Pidgin and school success, and on how best to build on the language that students come to school with in the achievement of school" (Da Pidgin Coup, 2008, p. 38). Another way to promote additive

bilingualism is through "language awareness seminars, classes or in-services for teachers" so that students and teachers can learn about the "history and social functions of both Pidgin and English" in the local community, which was the purpose for the course in this study (Da Pidgin Coup, 2008, p. 38). In an effort to educate and bring language awareness about Pidgin in a university context, the Introduction to Pidgin in Hawaiʻi course is an essential first step to minimize and eliminate the discrimination towards Pidgin. Additionally, to fulfill the research gap to understand the effects of additive bilingualism through language awareness seminars for Pidgin, this study investigated the students' knowledge and perspectives gained during the unusual semester.

THE CURRENT STUDY

Purpose of the Study

While most of the previous research on learning in higher education was conducted during non-pandemic times, the current study took an action research approach to investigate appropriate teaching practices and student learning during the novel COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike the spring 2020 semester when classes were abruptly shifted to being held online, this project took place in the fall 2020 semester with all courses being held online throughout the entire semester. The course, Introduction to Pidgin in Hawaiʻi, was a language awareness course where students learned about language rights and discrimination in relation to Pidgin.

Researcher Positionality

As the course instructor, as well as the researcher, I was born and raised in Hawaiʻi and consider myself to be a native speaker of Pidgin. At the time this project was conducted in fall 2020, I had not used Pidgin since I was an undergraduate student (2008-2016) as I was often told by family and friends that I spoke and acted like a "tita," which is a Pidgin term used to describe a local girl who uses Pidgin and is attached to several negative stereotypes, such as getting into physical fights (Meyerhoff, 2004). Therefore, family and friends told me that I needed to start speaking English if I wanted people to take me seriously. However, I thought I was already speaking "good English" since that was the "English" I grew up using and I had never been criticized for it. When I took courses on second language education, it was through in-class

discussions with other local students that I came to realize the English I was speaking was Pidgin rather than standard American English and that using Pidgin might interfere with English as a second language (ESL) students learning American English. Upon this realization, I began making a conscious effort to learn proper English and paid more attention to how people from the mainland spoke, wrote, and behaved so that I could distance myself from the "tita" identity. Upon entry into graduate school and working as an ESL instructor, I also made conscious efforts to speak and write using only proper English in order to achieve a professional image.

Research Questions

To better understand the teaching and learning that occurred throughout the online course, this study had three goals. The first goal was to learn what were effective classroom management strategies that supported students' learning. The two research questions that investigated this goal were:

1. How much student support is necessary for student success?
2. What do students report as being helpful in their learning experience?

This study also sought to answer calls from researchers and Pidgin advocates to investigate the effects of language awareness courses for Pidgin. Therefore, the second goal was to investigate the students' knowledge and perspectives gained from the course and the third research question was:

3. Through the course goals, topics, and my teaching, how did it shape students' knowledge and perspectives of Pidgin?

In addition to learning what the students gained from the course, the third goal of this study was to learn about my professional development as a novice university instructor. The last research question was:

4. "Where is my own personal and professional development in this?" (Edge, 2001, p. 5)

METHODS

Action Research

Action research is a research approach that takes a "a form of self-reflexive enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 162). At the same time, action research is also the "methodology of choice for social science researchers focusing on innovation" (Somekh, 2006, p. 2). In other words, "research can become a systematic intervention, going beyond describing, analysing and theorizing social practices to working in partnership with participants to reconstruct and transform those practices" (Somekh, 2006, p. 1). For the purposes of this study, both of these approaches to action research were used: action research as an approach to investigate how to improve the course and my own teaching and action research as a method to make changes.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) put forth a cyclical model of action research that includes planning, acting, observing, and reflecting as the four stages in one cycle and subsequent cycles are revisions to continuously improve or solve the problem and new problems that are identified upon reflection. In one cycle, the action researcher plans the research questions based on the problem, issue, or topic of interest to focus on and then selects the appropriate data collection and procedures that will gather the information that is needed to answer the research questions or show the outcome of a change (Burns, 2010). Data collection can include both naturally occurring data that are incorporated into the "strategies or actions" that are implemented in the classroom, such as teachers' lesson plans and students' assignments, and formal research methods, such as qualitative (e.g., interviews, descriptions of actions from observations, journaling, audio/video recording, etc.) and quantitative methods (e.g., questionnaires, frequency counts of actions from observations, etc.) (Burns, 2010, pp. 54-55). Following data collection, the data are objectively observed using the appropriate data analysis methods, such as thematic coding for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative data. Then the action researcher engages in self-reflection in which the self-reflection and action can occur as reflection-in-action, reflecting and acting as the situation occurs, or reflection-on-action, reflecting and acting after the situation, or reflection-for-action in which the purpose of reflecting

is to use the past experiences as a means to improve future actions or events (Killion & Todnem, 1991; Schön, 1983). Upon reflection, action research involves identifying a "problem" and carrying out one or more cycles to address the problem. Action researchers may reflect on their teaching practice, teaching experience, beliefs, values, and feelings (Burns, 2010). Using the results from data collection and reflection, the original research questions and data collection methods are revised to observe the new changes made to the course. As action research may be done on an individual, institutional, or organizational level, this study took an individual approach to focus on a single online course (Burns, 2019).

Participants

The students who participated in this study were undergraduate students enrolled in the Introduction to Pidgin in Hawaiʻi. In all, 11 students consented to participate in the study and their enrollment status, local versus non local, and the place they were joining the classroom are in Table 1. Six students were local and five students were nonlocal, with one student joining the class from the mainland. These students' college level ranged from freshmen to seniors. Each student was assigned the pseudonym "Da Kine," which is a pronoun in Pidgin, plus a number.

Data Collection Materials

Data were collected from numerous sources, including the class materials, student feedback, student work, and my reflection journal. To answer the first research question about student support, class material, such as weekly handouts and PowerPoints (PPTs), were collected to document the instructions for assignments to the students. As for the second research question about what students reported on being helpful for their learning experience, students provided feedback midway and at the end of the semester. These feedback forms asked about the helpfulness of the class material (e.g., handouts, PPTs, Zoom polls, etc.) on a 4-point Likert scale with open-ended questions that asked students to explain what they found to be the most and least helpful and to recommend changes. The midterm feedback form was developed first and asked students about the clarity of the assignment instructions they had been given so far as well as feedback for the handouts, PPTs, and Zoom polls. Then on the final feedback form, students were asked for their feedback on the clarity of the assignment instructions since the midterm.

Table 1

Participant Information

Participant	Enrollment Status	Local/Non-Local	Place Attending From
Da Kine 1	1st year	Non-Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 2	1st year	Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 3	N/A	Non-Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 4	2nd year	Non-Local	California
Da Kine 5	3rd year	Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 6	2nd year	Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 7	4th year	Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 8	1st year	Non-Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 9	4th year	Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 10	3rd year	Local	Hawai'i
Da Kine 11	3rd year	Non-Local	Hawai'i

Students were asked for their feedback on the handouts, PPTs, and Zoom polls again since I continued to use these materials with modifications as suggested by the students from the midterm feedback. Questions regarding the helpfulness and recommended changes for the Zoom chat was also included since I began to use it more after the midterm feedback. Questions about the helpfulness and recommended changes for discussions were also included on the final feedback form. To answer the third research question, students were asked how the course was shaping their knowledge and perspectives towards Pidgin in the feedback forms. Additionally, students' assignments that demonstrated their understanding and perspectives of Pidgin were also used to answer the third research question. As for the last question about my own professional development, the main source of data collection was from the reflection journal.

Procedure

The class met three times a week on Zoom with each class being 50 minutes long throughout the sixteen-week semester. Since the beginning of the semester, a weekly routine was established. First, weekly handouts were uploaded onto the course website on a Thursday or Friday prior to the week it was created for. Additionally, I explained the details of the handout at

the beginning of class on Fridays. For example, the handout for week two was uploaded and explained to the students on the Friday in week one. The PPTs for each week were also uploaded at the end of the week in which they were used for instruction as I continued to make changes throughout the week based on in-class discussions. The students completed the midterm feedback form in the seventh week of the semester. After reviewing the feedback, I made changes to the course according to the students' suggestions, which marked the second cycle to this action research study. The second cycle concluded at the end of the semester when students completed the second feedback form in the sixteenth week. The reflection journals were written on the PPTs so that I could write my reflection for the specific slides that interesting events or thoughts occurred.

Data Analysis

This study used quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the data. The quantitative data came from the 4-point Likert scale items on the midterm and final feedback forms and they were analyzed by calculating descriptive statistics. The qualitative data that were analyzed were from the open-ended response questions on the feedback forms and journal entries. Thematic analysis was used for all qualitative data in which the themes emerged inductively from the data (Burns, 2010). The themes from the feedback forms were related to the classroom management portion of this study and the usefulness of the course materials. The themes from the journals were related to issues I noticed throughout the course and my professional development and teacher identity as a local Pidgin-speaking instructor. The handouts and PPTs were used as data that would serve to illustrate what the comments from the feedback forms and journal entries were referring to.

RESULTS

Classroom Management Results from Cycle 1

Assignment instructions. To answer the first research question about how much student support was necessary for student success, the midterm feedback, as shown in Table 2, indicated that more support was needed. One aspect of the course that indicated more support was needed was when giving instructions for the assignments. Instructions for each assignment were on the

handouts and PPTs, and at the location of where the assignment was to be submitted, such as in the "Assignment" or "Discussion and Private Messages" sections on the university's classroom management website. Even though the instructions were posted in multiple formats, the instructions themselves were not always clear for the students. According to the feedback, the instructions for the small assignments, such as the data collection and written reflections, were not always clear and students explained that they wanted to be told how much they were expected to write. In response to this comment, I emphasized in subsequent assignments that the quality of their writing and the ability to write a comprehensive response to the question was more important than the length of their writing, which can be seen in the example shown in Figure 1. The instructions for each assignment on the handouts and PPTs were also enhanced by bolding and highlighting the reminder of when the assignment was due and providing the pathway on where to submit the assignment.

Table 2

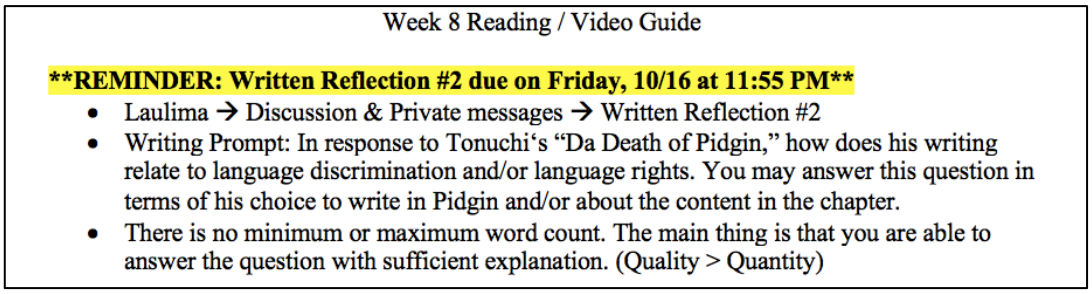
Midterm Feedback Results for Classroom Management

Question	*M*	*SD*	Min.	Max.
The instructions for Data Collection A were easy to follow.	4.00	0.00	4	4
The instructions for Written Reflection 1 were easy to follow.	3.80	0.40	3	4
The weekly handouts are helpful.	4.00	0.00	4	4
The PowerPoints are helpful.	3.60	0.66	2	4
The Zoom polls are helpful.	3.80	0.60	2	4

Note. $n = 10$

Figure 1

Screenshot of the Instructions for an Assignment on a Weekly Handout


Week 8 Reading / Video Guide

****REMINDER: Written Reflection #2 due on Friday, 10/16 at 11:55 PM****

- Laulima → Discussion & Private messages → Written Reflection #2
- Writing Prompt: In response to Tonuchi's "Da Death of Pidgin," how does his writing relate to language discrimination and/or language rights. You may answer this question in terms of his choice to write in Pidgin and/or about the content in the chapter.
- There is no minimum or maximum word count. The main thing is that you are able to answer the question with sufficient explanation. (Quality > Quantity)

Course materials. In terms of what students reported as being helpful in their online learning experience, the midterm feedback in Table 2 shows that the weekly handouts were the most helpful, followed by the Zoom polls and then the PPTs. In the fourth week of the semester, I documented in my journal that I began observing silence in the small group discussions when I entered the breakout rooms, which led me to learn that students had simply not downloaded and completed the handout prior to class. In the same journal entry, I also documented that even though I made efforts to constantly remind students where they can download the handouts and when they are made available, I also made additional efforts as part of my reflection-on-action to highlight and bold the "Discussion" and "Zoom Poll" section headings in the handout beginning in the handout for week 5. In the midpoint of the semester, the students explained that the weekly handouts were helpful because they were organized and easy to follow, and helped them to prepare for each class because they understood the expectations for each class and were able to answer the discussion questions in advanced. The Zoom polls were also considered helpful by the students who explained that they tested their knowledge of the readings and videos and served as a review. While the PPTs were the least helpful, the positive aspects were that they served as a visual aid for the information from the readings and the reminders and due dates for the assignments were made very clear.

Changes Implemented in Cycle 2 Based on Cycle 1 Results

Handout modifications. After reviewing the students' midterm feedback for each of these aspects, the changes implemented in the second cycle were based on the students' suggestions. For example, even though the handouts were the most helpful, Da Kine 4 suggested making the

questions easier as it was difficult to find the answers in the readings and Da Kine 8 wanted the handout to provide more information on what they would be doing in class. In response to these suggestions, I added more details on the handouts as shown in Figure 2. In this excerpt of the handout from the eighth week in the semester, I provided the section and page numbers in the reading to make it clearer where to locate an answer for the Zoom polls or where to use the information from the reading to formulate answers to the discussion questions. The most common comment from the students was the need to require them to complete the handout because they wanted to see more accountability for it being done. On reflecting-for-action in my journal entry at the end of the seventh week, I reflected on the grading system of the course and whether it was fair to make an assignment count for a grade moving forward. In the end, I decided that including the handouts as part of the grading system would be ideal to do at the onset of a new semester. As part of my reflection-on-action approach to resolve this issue, rather than adding on an additional assignment to the syllabus in the midpoint of the semester, I decided to incorporate other ways to check for accountability, such as utilizing Zoom's chat function for students to type in their answers from the handout. As I continuously reflected on making the students more accountable to prepare for class when making the handouts, I began creating more hands-on in-class activities that required students to work in small groups and use the information from the readings to analyze data and present it to the rest of the class. An example of this can be seen in the handout for the eleventh week in the Appendix. For Monday, students read an article about Pidgin used in commercials and found other examples of commercials produced by the same companies that were mentioned in the article. The agenda for class on Monday followed the usual lecture and small group discussion format. Then on Wednesday, students were required to work together and use what they had learned from the reading to analyze a commercial that was provided to them and give a short presentation to the class. In addition to holding students accountable for reading the article, this in-class activity was also meant to develop online collaboration skills and practice doing a group presentation. While this activity was meant for students to practice doing online group collaboration and presentation, my post-activity reflection in my journal indicated that I learned about issues to resolve before the final presentation, such as microphones that were not working and hesitancy by students to share their screens, which led me to share my screen for their mini-presentations.

Figure 2

Screenshot of Handout from Week 8 Handout

For Monday (10/12)

Crowley (2007). The consequences of vernacular (il)literacy in the Pacific. Read pages 164-172.

- Oral and Literate Cultures (p. 165-167)
  - Discussion Questions
    - What are the advantages/disadvantages of an oral-only culture?
    - What are the advantages/disadvantages of a literate culture?
    - After reading this section, how does this relate to Hawaiian and Pidgin?
- Pre-literacy, Literacy, and Illiteracy in the Pacific (p. 168-170)
  - Zoom Poll Questions:
    - How many indigenous languages are spoken in the Pacific?
    - What are the advantages of being literate in the Pacific?
  - Discussion Questions:
    - Based on your answer to the amount of indigenous languages in the Pacific, does it matter that all these languages are still around? Think about what you would say to defend the existence of a language.
    - Based on the advantages for being literate that you found, do these advantages matter? Are there other ways to be successful without being literate?

Zoom poll modifications. As for the Zoom polls, students did not like the questions having no relation to other aspects of the lesson. For example, Da Kine 7 explained that the questions "aren't used to tie in with the discussions" and Da Kine 8 said that it was the "only time this information really comes up." Rather than having the Zoom poll questions being asked unrelated to anything, Da Kine 7 suggested to not only "have it as one of the handouts discussion," but it also "should be used to as a way to see how students felt about the readings." To address these comments, Figure 2 shows my efforts to relate the discussion questions to the answers students should have found in the Zoom polls. For example, after reviewing how many indigenous languages are spoken in the Pacific through the Zoom poll and on the PPT, students were asked to discuss whether these languages mattered in small groups. Furthermore, Da Kine 8 suggested allowing the class to see what the results of the polls were. Up until this point, I did not realize that the students were not able to see the results live, but I was able to figure out how to share the poll results with the class.

PPT modifications. As for the PPTs, there were several comments about why they were not an effective tool for instruction. First, the PPTs had too much information, causing confusion and uncertainty about which information was important. Furthermore, students noticed that I only read from the slides, which caused them to become uninterested in the lecture. To improve the PPTs, the students suggested putting less words, bolding or highlighting the information they

should know, simplifying the slides, adding more pictures, and using more animations. The suggestions from the students were met, as appropriate, by using short phrases rather than sentences and pictures of cultural objects or concepts that are specific to Hawaiʻi.

Results from Cycle 2

Final feedback on assignment instructions. The feedback from the students at the end of the semester, as shown in Table 3, indicated aspects of the course that were helpful for their learning and areas to improve in the future. As I put more effort into making the instructions for the assignments clearer since the midterm, the results in Table 3 suggest that the instructions for the assignments were still not fully clear. The students' comment about the length requirement for their assignments was still persistent in the feedback, which suggests that undergraduates prefer or are accustomed to being told how much to write for an assignment. As there were local and nonlocal students in the course, the nonlocal students explained that having a second set of instructions for them would have been helpful as gaining access to interact with locals was difficult this semester due to the pandemic. Because many of their assignments required interacting with locals in Hawaiʻi, gaining access to survey or interview them was difficult for the nonlocal students due to the nature of the online environment and lockdown. As a result, the wording of the instructions and questions should have been adjusted to reflect their situations, while keeping requirements for the assignments the same. As for the projects, even though the quantitative results suggest that the instructions were not clear, the central issue that the students had was wanting more help with the analyses aspect of the projects.

Final feedback on PPTs. The feedback at the end of the semester also showed that the PPTs and in-class discussions were more helpful than the Zoom polls and chat activities, and the handouts were the least helpful. Whereas students disliked the PPTs for having too much text and information at the midpoint of the semester, the students' positive comments about the PPTs at the end of the semester included how I put the main points on the slides and elaborated on them in the lecture and the use of pictures and videos. Overall, the PPTs made it easy for the students to follow along. While the reaction to the PPTs improved since the midterm feedback, students wanted even more pictures and videos and they wanted more engaging and different slides each day rather than having slides that were either the same or looked similar.

Table 3

Final Feedback Results for Classroom Management

Question	*M*	*SD*	Min.	Max.
The instructions for assignments were easy to follow (This includes data assignments and written reflections).	3.82	0.38	3	4
The instructions for the Individual Linguistic Landscape Project were easy to follow.	3.82	0.57	2	4
The instructions for the Group Linguistic Landscape Project were easy to follow.	3.82	0.39	3	4
The instructions for the Community Engagement Experience were easy to follow.	4.00	0.00	4	4
The weekly handouts were helpful.	3.45	0.66	2	4
The PowerPoints were helpful.	3.82	0.39	3	4
The Zoom polls were helpful.	3.64	0.88	1	4
The Zoom chat was helpful.	3.64	0.64	2	4
The discussions were helpful.	3.82	0.39	3	4

Note. $n = 11$

Final feedback on in-class discussions. The in-class discussions were not asked about on the midterm feedback form, but according to final feedback results, the students' overall evaluations were positive. Students liked the discussions because they were able to exchange ideas and learn the perspectives of people from other islands, the mainland, and foreign countries. However, over half of the participants complained that the small group discussions were awkward and frustrating when they had group members that did not read the article and some students did not talk at all. Due to these experiences, five students suggested that I force everyone to talk and participate. Additional comments related to increasing student engagement was requiring everyone to turn their video camera on and making sure there was at least one talkative person in each group. My journal entries also demonstrated that I shared the same frustration as these students as I documented in several journal entries that a majority of the students kept their cameras off during class, such as in my journal entry dated November 13, 2020 in week 12:

> Only one student has their camera on as I am speaking. I'm not quite sure how to react to this. I know they're there because they insert comments in the chat, but it is nice to see if they are actually attentive. I reminded them today of guest speaker etiquette to ensure that they have the courtesy to turn their cameras on.

While my reflection-in-action in this journal entry was to ensure everyone's camera was turned on for guest speakers, it was difficult to problem-solve whether to force all cameras being turned on during regular class time when students demonstrated active participation using the chat function.

Final feedback on Zoom features. The Zoom polls and chat were rated similarly in the final feedback. After making the Zoom poll questions easier to find by using the exact wording from the reading, many comments were positive as it was a quick and easy way to review the readings. However, there were several aspects of the Zoom polls that had mixed reactions from the students. For example, while Da Kine 1 commented that the Zoom polls were helpful because the questions were taken directly from the readings, Da Kine 7 said that the polls were not helpful for that same reason. Furthermore, even though many students found the Zoom polls helped them to review the readings, Da Kine 8 commented that it didn't help to reinforce anything and they were infrequently done. To improve the Zoom polls, students suggested grading the correctness of the answers rather than giving participating points to hold their classmates accountable for reading and completing the handouts as many suggestions were similar to Da Kine 5's comment: "Maybe have them more frequently and possibly worth some points just because there are many people who don't do the readings and it seems unfair to those classmates who did them, and are contributing to the conversation in the breakout rooms while others are just sitting there and say that they didn't do the reading." As for the chat function in Zoom, the response was overall positive as students appreciated the opportunity to discuss amongst each other or with me privately without causing a distraction, my response to their questions in the chat, and sharing links or other information. To better improve the effectiveness of the chat, students suggested checking the chat more since some of the comments or questions were not always seen by me.

Final feedback on handouts. While the handouts were the most helpful for students in the first half of the semester, the handouts became the least helpful in the second half of the semester. Students still attributed the handouts to be helpful in seeing the plans for each class.

However, making the handouts required was still the most common reason for them being not helpful and students strongly recommended the need to make the everyone in the class held accountable for doing them. Another weakness to the handout as indicated by my journal entry at the end of the eighth week was that "I think I put too much on the handout ☹," indicating that I tried to make too many connections to the Zoom poll and discussion questions and there wasn't enough time in class to cover it all. This reflection-for-action entry indicated that I needed to have better balance of content on the handout with in-class time-management.

Students' Knowledge and Perspectives

To answer the second research question, students were asked the following question on the midterm and final feedback form: "To what extent is this course (through its goals, topics, lectures, and discussions) promoting Pidgin?" Students answered this question on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not well, 4 = very well) and they were asked to explain their rating. On average, students rated the class as promoting Pidgin very well (M = 3.80, SD = 0.40) and attributed their response to learning about the history of how Pidgin was created, the culture associated with Pidgin, and the stereotypes surrounding Pidgin in society. Students were also asked how learning about Pidgin shaped their knowledge and perspective of it so far. The comments suggest that the non-local students had sympathy for the locals who speak Pidgin. For example, Da Kine 4 explained, "I have gained a larger respect for locals that deal with discrimination because of their language." Students also commented that after learning about the unfounded reasons for the discrimination towards Pidgin, they have come to view Pidgin as its own language that should not be looked down upon and that speaking Pidgin does not necessarily mean the speaker is uneducated. This course also shifted their perspectives of Pidgin as one student admitted in the midterm feedback that they had negative views towards Pidgin, but it began to change as they learned more about it and by the end of the course, they no longer thought of Pidgin speakers as being less than them (Da Kine 7).

At the end of the semester, the students rated the class slightly higher in how it promoted Pidgin (M = 3.82, SD = 0.39). While this class provided various perspectives towards Pidgin, one student commented that after I "provided information on it, allowed students to come to their own opinion but provided enough information that made it clear Pidgin was an actual language that deserved respect" (Da Kine 8). Da Kine 1's comment further supports the ability for the

course to promote Pidgin in a positive light by explaining, "I learned a lot about Pidgin and its importance during this class. Pidgin was portrayed in a positive light, so I was able to develop informed opinions without negative influence." In response to the question that addressed how learning about Pidgin shaped students' knowledge and perspective, the main theme was that students learned to have respect towards Pidgin as a language. For instance, Da Kine 4 explained "I feel that exposing us to the issues regarding speaking Pidgin in various settings gave me a more respectful outlook to those that speak Pidgin on a daily basis."

At the end of the semester, I asked the students what they had learned that was the most valuable in the course, or in other words, what was the one thing they would remember when reflecting on their time in the course. Based on the answers shown in Table 4, two themes that emerged were students' acceptance of Pidgin as a language and its importance to local culture. The results also show that this course has increased students' awareness of their behavior in public, such as Da Kine 5's comment about how they need to be careful about telling local jokes in public to avoid offending someone. Furthermore, the responses also indicate that the local students gained a heightened sense of pride and appreciation of Hawaiʻi and its history, as observed in Da Kine 2 and Da Kine 4's comments.

Instructor's Professional Development

Having documented my experiences in my journal, I observed aspects of professional development that occurred and aspects that I still need to work on as a novice university instructor. One aspect of my professional development that the journal entries showed was the constant challenge of having students download and complete the handout. I created the handouts as a way to help the students prepare their answers for the Zoom polls and discussions so that class time could be used efficiently. However, it became obvious that students were not completing the handouts as I wrote about my experiences of entering a quiet breakout room and having to initiate the discussion. This experience was also supported by the comments from the students in their course feedback in which they became frustrated with their classmates who did not contribute to the discussion at all. Even though the handout was not listed as a requirement in

Table 4

Students' Responses to the Valuable Aspects of the Course

Participant	Response
Da Kine 1	It was valuable to me to really explore why Pidgin is considered a language rather than a dialect. I didn't understand that it was its own language before I took this course.
Da Kine 2	The revival of Pidgin and the whole culture the language was able to create. Language can bring people of complete opposite tongues together and bind them into a community. I am so proud that my ancestors on the plantation were able to contribute to this culture.
Da Kine 3	I've always been interested in classes like Women and Gender Studies as well as Ethnic Studies classes. This class reminded me of those because it did a wonderful job expressing the importance of Pidgin. Language is an easy target for people to use to discriminate against other people, and I will always be willing to learn about these struggles to try and fight for people's language rights.
Da Kine 4	I think that I have gained a lot of knowledge surrounding contemporary pidgin issues. I find that this information is very interesting, and I believe that taking this class has allowed me to learn more about the island where my school is located.
Da Kine 5	One thing that I will take away from this course is that the humor we use in Hawaii is very different from the humor that outsiders are used to so I have to be aware of the kinds of jokes that I say around certain people.
Da Kine 6	I think the one thing I will take away from this course is that pidgin is an important aspect of a locals life, especially in Hawai'i. We need to encourage others to keep it alive and to be open to those who speak it instead of judging.
Da Kine 7	The discourse of the language not being language and that the perception of the language is negative even within the communities that speak it. It changed how I thought because I felt like that should change.
Da Kine 8	I have more respect for languages, especially creoles-- I think I'm more well-rounded when it comes to how a person speaks now.
Da Kine 9	I will remember how pidgin was frowned upon before, and now it is considered a second language.
Da Kine 10	linguistic landscapes analysis
Da Kine 11	The importance of Pidgin in local culture and how common and uncommon it is in different settings!

the syllabus because it was meant to be a supportive guide for students' learning, I would make it required for participation points the next time I have an opportunity to teach the course.

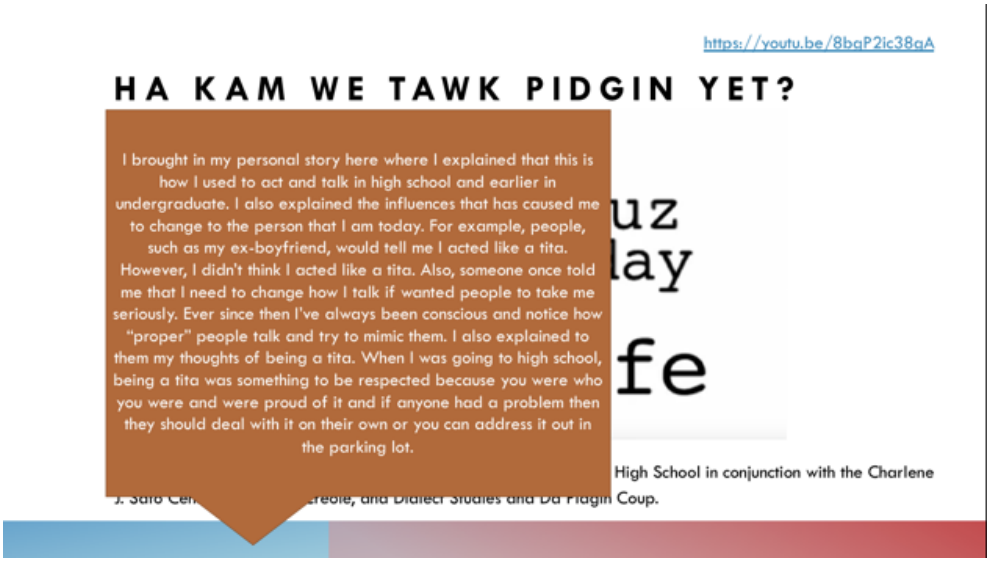
My journal entries have also shown growth in my professional development by serving as a local instructor teaching about Pidgin. Prior to teaching this course, I did not take Pidgin seriously as a language and distanced myself from the language by speaking, writing, and behaving like someone from the U.S. mainland in order to create an American identity when I was an ESL instructor and as a professional doctoral student. However, as I taught about Pidgin, I began to share personal stories of growing up with Pidgin and I slowly began to use more Pidgin. For example, the topic in the seventh week of the semester was about Pidgin rights in education and one of the assignments was to watch a short film of high school students explaining why they use Pidgin. When I reviewed the film in class, I shared a personal story with the class about how I used to talk and act like the students in the film and how and why I had to change to become the person that I am today, as shown in my journal entry in Figure 3. As a local instructor teaching about Pidgin, telling stories about my experiences of growing up in Hawaiʻi aided in my authenticity and legitimacy as the instructor. However, a part of my professional development in teaching the course was my authenticity as a Pidgin speaker. Although I would consider myself a native speaker of Pidgin, I have not used Pidgin in many years. Moreover, Pidgin is a form of casual speech and is used in informal situations, but being a university instructor has a formal and professional identity attached to it. As a result, the contrast in formality and my limited usage of Pidgin had made it difficult for me to speak like a native speaker in Pidgin. While I did try to use Pidgin throughout the semester, being able to use Pidgin naturally again will continue to be part of my professional development.

DISCUSSION

The present action research study was designed to learn about effective online classroom management strategies, students' knowledge and perspectives about Pidgin, and my own professional development as a novice university instructor. To answer the first research question about the amount of student support necessary for students' success, the data suggested that it was not only important for me to give clear instructions and incorporate engaging class activities, but it was also essential that the material I created was meaningful to the students. In other words, it was essential that the handouts helped students prepare for the upcoming week and that the PPTs provided visual support and cohesion to the different aspects of the lesson. In response

Figure 3

Journal Entry in Week 7



to my efforts of providing as much student support as possible through the course material, the students reported that it would have been more helpful to their learning experience if I had made these supportive materials required and encouraged more participation from all students. To answer Herington and Weaven's (2008) call for research on how to use online classroom activities to develop students' technical skills and content learning, this study showed that it was more effective when information-based activities, such as the Zoom polls, were used to review the readings first and then have the students use the content knowledge to exchange opinions or apply that knowledge to create a small group presentation. This also aligns with Conrad and Donaldson's (2004) Phases of Engagement framework in which by the end of the course, students transitioned from pair and small group discussions to knowledge producers.

As the course was designed to raise students' awareness of Pidgin, the goal of the third research question was to learn how the course shaped students' knowledge and perspectives of Pidgin. The findings from this study showed that students learned about the history and sociolinguistic functions of Pidgin, which supports the goals of the language awareness initiative proposed by Da Pidgin Coup (2008). Moreover, students viewed Pidgin as a part of Hawaiʻi's local culture and they developed a greater sense of respect for Pidgin as a language. This contrasts with previous research that described the stigma and negative views toward Pidgin (Da

Pidgin Coup, 2008; Wong, 1999). Additionally, these results further contribute to recent research on attitudes and perspectives towards Pidgin. Higgins et al. (2012) conducted a critical language awareness film project with high school students in Hawaiʻi and found a shift in positive attitudes towards Pidgin as students initially viewed Pidgin as broken English, but later came to realize it is not broken English. In another study, Lockwood and Saft (2016) interviewed faculty at the University of Hawaiʻi Hilo campus and found that the faculty not only viewed Pidgin as being equal to English, but they also thought Pidgin was appropriate for students to use in a university course. These findings provide hope that more positive views and recognition of Pidgin as a language by the younger generation may prevent the death of Pidgin as a language as posed by Tonouchi (2009).

As for the final goal of this study to learn about my own professional development as a novice university instructor, the feedback from the students and my journal entries showed growth as well as room for improvement. An area of growth that I observed in my journals was the recognition and appreciation of Pidgin as my native language. Although I have stopped using Pidgin and downplayed the characteristics of a local in Hawaiʻi due to my professional identity, I observed growth in my teaching by not hiding my local identity to my students. Because I did not have to hide or be ashamed of Pidgin and the social behaviors associated with it, I was able to reinforce the effort to create positive attitudes towards Pidgin with my students. In regards to my teaching, as Mulryan-Kyne (2010) suggested that the teachers' expertise and competency is essential for student learning, this study supported that finding as the students considered it important that I develop more competency in enforcing active student participation and accountability for their learning.

Implications

The findings from this study provide pedagogical implications for higher education. Based on the students' responses in this study, handouts are helpful only if instructors make them required to complete. As the research on asynchronous online discussions highlight the need for structured guidelines, the same can be said for synchronous online discussions and possibly F2F contexts though these two contexts would need to make the structured handouts part of the course requirements to ensure that everyone had read the articles and answered the discussion questions in advanced in order to facilitate effective use of class time. Being in the synchronous

online context made it impossible to view whether the students had completed the handout in advanced and had it open on their computers during class, whereas the instructor could observe physical copies of the handout on the students' desks or digital copies opened on the students' computer in a F2F context. Moreover, the results from this study showed the need for instructors to enforce active participation from every student, especially during small group discussions. Banna et al. (2015) suggested several strategies online instructors could use to ensure continuous active student participation, such as including a course contract listing students' responsibilities, giving participation points, and assigning a different task to each group member during group discussions. Instructors may also use Conrad and Donaldson's (2004) Phases of Engagement framework to scaffold and increase students' participation. These strategies may also apply to a F2F context, though the distant nature of the online format and the inability to simultaneously observe all of the small group discussions happening in the breakout rooms is what made enforcing student engagement difficult in the synchronous online context. As for the affordances that Zoom provides, the polls are beneficial to student learning in that they help students to recall information from the reading. While the polls are a unique feature to Zoom, the face-to-face classroom equivalent would be the use of iClickers, which is a portable remote that students use to answer multiple choice questions, or Kahoot, which students can use their smart phones to answer multiple choice questions.

As this was an action research study done in the Introduction to Pidgin in Hawaiʻi course, the results also provide pedagogical implications for future course offerings. If this course is held online with students joining from the U.S. mainland or another country, a second set of instructions for some assignments need to be made for those students. For example, a second set of instructions needed to be made for the linguistic landscape project that students worked on individually since the students who were not in Hawaiʻi could not take pictures of Hawaiian and Pidgin.

Limitations

There were several limitations for this study. One limitation of this study was that it is based on only one semester of teaching the course. Consequently, this has also led to the small sample size represented in this study. The methodology of this study is also limited in that interviews were not conducted to gather more elaborations on observations from the feedback and course

work. Another limitation to consider is the likelihood of whether this course will be held online again in the future. While this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic that caused many university courses to be conducted online, the future modality of higher education courses is uncertain. As a result, the usefulness of the online implications that were provided in this study would depend on how much longer higher education courses are required to be held online, such as strategies that compensates for the physical limitation of the instructor not being able to monitor simultaneous students' interactions.

Future Research

Based on this action research project, there is abundant room for future research. First, replications of this study are needed to address the limitation of a small sample size. Moreover, replications would also allow for more cycles in the action research process to determine the effectiveness of the changes proposed by students at the end of this study to improve the quality of the learning experience. As this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, replications of this action research project post-pandemic would also allow for the comparison of affordances between online and face-to-face education.

In addition to replications of this study, further research should be undertaken to investigate students' learning experiences related to Pidgin. As many of the earlier studies documented the negative perspectives towards Pidgin, the results of this study suggest courses about Pidgin have resulted in students gaining more respect towards Pidgin as a language and as an important aspect of local identity. In order to develop a fuller picture of students' perspectives towards Pidgin over time, studies that investigate students' perspectives before, during, and after the course are needed.

CONCLUSION

The present action research study discussed supportive online classroom management strategies, students' knowledge and positive perspectives towards Pidgin, and my professional development as a novice university instructor. As many higher education institutions continue to hold classes online for spring 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this study has identified classroom management strategies that support students' success in learning. Moreover, this study

has shown positive effects in students' knowledge and perspectives towards Pidgin, which highlights the effectiveness and value of language awareness classes even as they are held online. Finally, growth in my professional development was observed in this study as I adjusted to a new teaching context and embraced Pidgin as my native language. Furthermore, the findings from this action research study has identified areas to improve in my teaching. In conclusion, this action research study has documented the realities of teaching an online university course about Pidgin during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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APPENDIX

Week 11 Reading / Video Guide

For Monday (11/2)

Hiramoto, M. (2011). Consuming the consumers: Semiotics of Hawai'i Creole in advertisements. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, *26*(2), 247-275.

- This is one of the commercials discussed in the article. The other three were not available online. O'Toole's Irish Pub: Bar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZZ5X8AhI1E)
- Watch other commercials from AIG Hawaii and Oceanic Cable Hawaii.
    - How are the commercials similar or different to the ones described in the article?

For Wednesday (11/4):

Advertisement In-Class Analysis

- In groups, you will be assigned an advertisement.
- Pre-class preparation:
    - Watch the advertisement and think about the following questions:
        - Who speaks Pidgin?
        - What kind of Pidgin is it? (see basilectal, acrolectal, and mesolectal descriptions on page 254 in Hiramoto's article)
        - Does the type of Pidgin match the character?
        - Who speaks English? Local or mainland English?
        - Are they different from the Pidgin speaker?
        - What other markers of Hawaii are used?
        - Is the commercial a rational-argumentative format? Emotional-suggestive format? If it is an emotional-suggestive format, is it a "slice-of-life" format or "problem-solving" format? See page 256 in Hiramoto's article for descriptions of these.
        - What's your reaction to this commercial?
- In-class activity:

- Together as a group, you will discuss your answers to the questions above and put together a presentation reporting on your group's answers.
- You will either present at the end of class or on Friday (11/6), depending on time.
- Link for Google Slides to work collaboratively (CLICK HERE) The link is also available in the Resources folder on Laulima.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5

Group 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhvKTOLTEQ0

Group 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlzdvY-FTbQ

Group 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqChkRQNZBA

Group 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAZdlFl7Hqk

Group 5: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rNvVHkPaS0